

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

**Remarks at an Obama Victory Fund 2012 Fundraiser in Westport,
Connecticut**

August 6, 2012

The President. Thank you, everybody. Well, it is wonderful to be here. And there are just a couple of people I want to acknowledge. First of all, obviously, Harvey and Georgina have just been great friends and have done so much for us, not just in this election, but in the previous one. A couple of other people who I want to mention: your Governor, Dan Malloy, is here, who's doing outstanding work here in Connecticut. I want to thank Anne Hathaway for taking the time to host us. She's spectacular. [Laughter] And I did get a chance to see Batman. [Laughter] And she was the best thing in it. [Laughter] That's just my personal opinion. Aaron Sorkin, who writes the way every Democrat in Washington wished they spoke. [Laughter] Aaron, thank you.

And Joanne Woodward, what a treat this is. Joanne and Paul were not only I think what was best about American film, but also just embodied the American spirit in so many ways. And their love story and the way they took so many people under their wing and helped so many people I think made them something more important than just folks in film. And for her to be here, what a great treat that is. So thank you so much for taking the time. Thank you.

Now, you know, in these kind of intimate settings, I usually don't make a long speech because what I want to do is have a conversation. And so let me just say a few things at the top.

I'll give you a sense of the kind of season we're in. Jim Messina, my campaign manager, tells this story. He was at an event like this, and there was a young couple; they had a 4-year-old boy, cute as can be. And during this campaign event, there was a picture of me there. And so the parents, very proudly, prompt the son, "Who is that?" And he says, "That's Barack Obama." And they say, "Well, and what does Barack Obama do?" And he thinks for a second, and he says, "Barack Obama approves this message." [Laughter]

Now, that speaks to the state of affairs in politics today. [Laughter] Unless you have—you don't have a TV set or your cable is busted, you're seeing an awful lot of stuff about politics. And the reason I think there's so much intensity is because we've got a choice that is as stark and as critical as any that we've seen in my lifetime, in some ways, more important than 2008.

In 2008, we came together—and it wasn't just Democrats, it was Independents and some Republicans—because we recognized that for over a decade the core idea at the heart of this country was at risk: the idea that if you work hard, that hard work is rewarded, that you can make it here if you try, regardless of what you look like, where you come from, what your last name is.

And for a decade, we had seen job growth slow, and we had seen jobs moving overseas, and we had seen people working harder and harder, but coming up with less because the costs were going up a lot faster than their wages and their incomes. And this all culminated in the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

We have spent 3½ years, a little over 3½ years now, trying to make sure that this country gets back on its feet. And because of the extraordinary resilience of the American people, we have seen signs of recovery: 4.5 million new jobs, half a million new manufacturing jobs, an auto industry that is reinvigorated.

But we didn't work this hard in 2008 just to get back to where we were in 2007. Our notion was that we needed to rebuild a country where the foundations for people who were willing to act responsibly were there for them either to feel security in the middle class or to climb into the middle class and maybe do even better. And that means making sure that we have an education system that works, which is why we've initiated more aggressive education reform across the country than any President in a very long time and the reason that we put so much emphasis on making college more affordable for young people.

It meant health care, because in a country this wealthy, we shouldn't go bankrupt when we get sick. And the Affordable Care Act means that 30 million people will have health insurance, but it also means that people who already have health insurance have a little more security.

We did an event just before we came here, and there was a woman who clearly is doing fine and is well insured, but she personally thanked me for the health care bill because she said, my husband just got cancer and we weren't sure whether we were going to hit that \$1 million limit on our insurance policy. Well, that limit is no longer allowed under the Affordable Care Act, which means they may not lose their house because of an illness.

It means making investments in science and research that are what made us an economic superpower. It means having a Tax Code that's fair so that we bring down our deficit not on the backs of folks who are struggling, but we ask those of us who are—who've been incredibly blessed by this country to do a little bit more, understanding that when folks in the middle and the bottom are doing well, everybody does well and the economy grows.

It means a foreign policy that recognizes the force of our example and our ideals and our capacity to engage with countries diplomatically is a complement to our incredible military power. And it's not a sign of weakness to say that we are going to reach out around the world and engage people.

So we've had a lot of work to do over the last 3½ years, and we're not done. We're just—we've gotten on track, but these gains are reversible. And you've got the other party and the other candidate who don't just want to reverse the gains that we've made over the last 3½ years, but in many ways, want to reverse gains we've made over the last 40 or 50 or 60 years.

When you look at their budget, and they say that they want to initiate a \$5 trillion tax cut on top of the Bush tax cut, what that functionally means is that either you blow up the deficit by another \$5 trillion—which they say is irresponsible—or you're going to have to eliminate funding for education, for infrastructure, for basic science and research. Medicare is going to be a voucher system, which means that seniors may end up paying thousands of dollars more for care that they were counting on.

When Mitt Romney says he wants to eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood, I think he means it. When he says that Arizona is a model for how we should deal with immigration, I think that fundamentally misunderstands that we're a nation of laws, but also a nation of immigrants.

So on a whole host of issues, you've got very stark differences. And the good news is that you guys are the tiebreaker, you and the American people. And when you walk into that ballot box—or don't walk into the ballot box. That's the second time I've said this today. *[Laughter]* When you walk into the voting booth—it's illegal, I'm sure, to walk into a ballot box. *[Laughter]* When you cast your ballot, you will have the opportunity to determine the course of this

country's direction not just tomorrow, or next year, or 5 years from now, but probably for decades to come.

And the great privilege of being President is you interact with people from every walk of life, from every corner of the country. And what you discover is the faith that I brought into this office in the American people—their core decency and their values and their resilience and their fundamental fairness—they have never disappointed me. And I'm confident that they won't this time either—despite the fact that we've got all these negative ads raining down on our heads and super PACs running around with folks writing \$10 million checks—because when the American people focus and are paying attention, their instincts are sound and they know what makes this country great.

That's what we're going to be fighting for, and we've got 90 days to do it. So I hope you guys are onboard. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at the residence of Harvey Weinstein and Georgina Chapman. In his remarks, he referred to fundraiser cohosts actress Anne Hathaway, screenwriter Aaron Sorkin, and actress Joanne Woodward; and Republican Presidential candidate former Gov. W. Mitt Romney of Massachusetts. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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